



REPORT

From the office of the...

Chief & Deputy Returning Officers

TO: Members of the Executive Board
FROM: Chloe Deraiche & Sarah Figueiredo
SUBJECT: Final EB Report
DATE: Wednesday March 21st, 2018

UPDATE

After an eventful year in the elections department, we have almost wrapped up our terms and jobs as members of the department. We experienced many highs and a few lows in these positions, and are looking forward to seeing how the department progresses over the course of the next year. Between the events that were held and the very dedicated and hard work of our committee, we are thankful for a successful year.

SERVICE USAGE

Voter engagement & turnout, as a whole, was noticeably lower this year compared to the last few. This is likely due to several factors, which may include issues with voting emails, as well as voter fatigue due to a high volume of candidates in certain elections. Our very first event in September, “Elections 1A03” set a great pace for the year in terms of engagement. We saw many first years out to that event, many of whom decided to run for elected positions throughout the course of the year. Additionally, we saw a very high turnout to both the MSU Presidential Meet & Greet and the MSU Presidential Debate. The turnout was higher than anticipated at both events, which is definitely a good sign. In addition to in-person service usage, due to the long nature of the presidential appeals process and the liveliness of this year’s elections, we have seen an influx of follows/engagement online as well. Our Facebook page reached over 900 likes this year, which is excellent. The page lost a few “likes” following the elections, as people are aware that there will be no more results posted. That being said, we always see an influx of “likes” around the time of elections, so it should balance out fairly well.

PAST EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

As previously mentioned, we held three events as a department this year. The first was “Elections 1A03”, in collaboration with MSU First Year Council. This event was extremely well received and went off quite well. We had a team of very helpful & engaged volunteers who gave up their night & dedicated their time to helping first year students become acquainted with the electoral process. Following this event, we noticed

that many of the students in attendance made the decision to run for an elected position at some point during the year, whether it was FYC, SRA, or Faculty positions.

The other two events that were held by the department this year were the MSU Presidential Meet & Greet and the MSU Presidential Debate. Sarah took the lead on planning these events, and they went extremely well. It was difficult planning for the large number of candidates in terms of seating and time allotment, but in the end, these details all worked out. The Meet & Greet was excellent; having Chukky MC was definitely an excellent decision, as he helped choose very interesting and thought provoking questions, while also providing some comic relief to candidates in their first large-scale speaking engagement of the campaign. Additionally, TwelvEighty was **packed**, and we found ourselves looking for more seating to try to accommodate the extremely large audience that the event acquired.

The MSU Debate also went quite well. We were quite worried about time, however we ended up being well under and were able to wrap up early. We had several questions prepared for the candidates, as well as a few questions that came from the audience. Unfortunately, we had difficulty finding an ASL interpreter for that event, and in the end had to proceed without one. Moving forward, our recommendation would be to find an interpreter as soon as the date of the event is selected, and have several backups. For some reason it was a busy time of year for interpreters, so looking for one as soon as humanly possible is something to keep in mind.

UPCOMING EVENTS, PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

As we reach the end of our terms, we are wrapping up in our roles and tying up any loose ends that we have left. Unfortunately due to the extended appeals process from presidentials, the files at our desk have yet to be dealt with. The two of us have decided to make it a one-day event, where we sit down and digitize as much as we can in one sitting, likely on a weekend.

Other than that, we are just finishing up with SRA generals for Engineering, as well as finishing up some external elections that have come our way. We are also currently processing reimbursements for both Presidentials and SRA generals.

BUDGET

200 dollars was used from the SRA Generals Promotions line to create a SRA Generals promo package, leaving the remaining balance at 0.

We are also currently in the midst of processing reimbursements from MSU Presidentials and SRA generals. As the appeals process has just finalized, we are still in the process of determining the exact amount to be reimbursed for each candidate. We can expect this total to be defined by the end of the week. However, due to a large volume of fines and a large number of candidates, it is likely that we will go over the allotted amount for presidential reimbursements.

In several areas, we found that the amount of funds allotted to a particular area was not enough to allow us to advertise or act to the best of our abilities (in particular, promotions). This could be something that may be looked into upon further discussion. For example, SRA genreals was allotted only 200 dollars (the equivalent of only one promotions package), so we were unable to run larger scale events.

VOLUNTEERS

Other than some minor issues with committee member retention, we could not be happier with the hard work of the members of the Elections Committee this year. Whether it was evaluating the rules before an election, making calls regarding rules or candidates *during* an election, or spending countless hours evaluating fines following an election, each member consistently gave 110% throughout the year. We were lucky to have a room full of very insightful individuals who provided many perspectives surrounding elections. Even on the night of presidentials when we were in the boardroom for 10 hours, they continued to remain professional and committed to their roles until the very end. Our committee had to make some very difficult choices this year, and we are incredibly proud of them and stand behind their decisions.

CURRENT CHALLENGES

We faced a number of challenges this year, the largest being the difficulties we have had with SimplyVoting. Similar issues have occurred in the past, but for some reason, they seemed amplified this year. We have been in constant contact with SimplyVoting trying to rectify the issues as they arise, however we have been unable to find a viable large-scale solution. Additionally, we have been working with Pauline and UTS to the best of our abilities to get the emails out to all students. John has been in contact with SimplyVoting regarding a modification of the system we are currently using in order to make it more user friendly, and hopefully a solution will be found to reduce some of the issues that arose this year. SimplyVoting is also making some systematic changes to its platform in the fall, which should resolve several of the problems we encountered. We will be passing all of the information we have learned on to our successors in order to better help them next year.

Another challenge that the department as a whole encountered this year was the fact that 2 candidates were disqualified, and this brought up some gaps in the electoral process that we had previously not identified or noticed as significantly. Two of our members gave a delegation to the SRA acknowledging these gaps, explaining the process as it sits, and provided some solutions that could be looked at moving forward. I encourage the elections team next year to take a look at these recommendations and consult with their committee and the BOD on how this process can change to be more accessible and transparent.

Finally, a large challenge that has hit us towards the end of our term is that Chloe has been dealing with some personal health concerns, so that has unfortunately slowed things down a bit. She has been unable to come into the office due to her health, and is now trying to catch up on both work and academics before exams hit. Sarah has been

wonderful in picking up the slack that has been left behind, and Preethi and Victoria have also been very helpful during this stressful time.

SUCSESSES

We experienced many successes this year, as a team. Our successes took place in the style of small victories throughout the year; events, meetings, and promotions all added up to a plethora of successes for the department. The events that were held were enormous successes, and the presidential campaign period went off without a hitch. Honestly, our largest success was making it out of presidentials alive. As tough as being a part of the department is, I would definitely say that we came out on top with more knowledge & insight than we could have hoped from these roles. Every time we faced a setback, we were greeted immediately with the support that we needed to get us moving forward again.